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24 Nations Represented at CJOS COE Maritime Security Conference

SORRENTO, Italy. – More than 180 military and civilian attendees representing 24 nations took part in the Combined Joint Operations from the Sea Centre of Excellence (CJOS COE) second annual Maritime Security Conference in Sorrento, Italy, March 31 – April 2.

The COE is a U.S. Second Fleet-hosted entity, which offers recognized expertise and experience to the benefit of the NATO Alliance, especially in support of transformation. It provides opportunities to enhance education and training and to improve interoperability. The COE is not part of the NATO Command Structure (NCS), but forms part of the wider framework supporting the NCS.

The conference, themed “Delivering Maritime Security in Global Partnership: Improving Collective Capabilities,” aimed to build on CJOS COE’s successful May 2008 conference by highlighting further developments in regional maritime security partnerships around the world.

The event also focused on information sharing initiatives, and featured 24 speakers who updated attendees on policy developments in areas such as the Integrated Coast Guard initiative recently enacted by the Maritime Organization for West and Central Africa, and the emerging policies for countering piracy off Somalia.

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Addressing the recent increase in piracy and multi-national efforts to address the issue, CJOS COE Director Vice Adm. Mel Williams Jr. said, “The pirates have awakened a sleeping giant. That giant is the international community of like-minded people who believe in the rule of law in the maritime environment.”

Guest speakers and discussion panelists included senior leadership and representatives from the United Nations, NATO’s Allied Command Transformation, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa, U.S. Africa Command, Republic of Singapore Navy, and numerous non-governmental organizations, commercial shipping organizations and defense industry firms.

“Our objectives for this conference included a review of the dynamic challenges we now face in ensuring global maritime security, and to promote emerging strategies to meet these challenges in a globally-coordinated partnership,” said CJOS COE deputy director Commodore Bob Mansergh. “It is extremely rare to be able to bring so many real experts together into one forum, for an extended period, to identify ways of moving ahead positively and efficiently. We are fortunate to have such a diverse group this year add to the success of our first conference last year.”

Results from a survey administered to conference attendees revealed a 98 percent “significant value” rating for this conference’s content and scope.

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CJOS COE is an international military organization, accredited by the North Atlantic Council of NATO, and hosted within the U.S. Second Fleet Maritime Headquarters. The COE is sponsored by 13 nations, all of whom are in NATO, and its mission is to support the transformation of NATO joint operations from the sea. The sponsoring nations of CJOS COE include Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Turkey, and the U.S.

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